

CORALINN,
A PERSIAN TALE.
CHAPTER X.

CONCLUDED.

"The world is full of beauty. To the eye
Where'er it sends its wistful orb, is spread
A scene of glories. Earth, air, sky,
Are mark'd with characters which we
may read
Who hath a high attainment of the mind,
A bright perception with the eternal eye
A glowing likeness in his soul enshrin'd,
Of what is great and pure and heavenly."

H. TAPPAN.

Ten years after the events we have related, had transpired, in consequence of some misunderstanding which had arisen between the India Government and the shah of Persia, it was deemed necessary that some individual qualified for the purpose, should proceed to Tcheran, then the residence of the Persian court, to make it possible, a satisfactory adjustment of the difficulties that threatened to interrupt the harmony of the two governments.

In the opinion of the Marquis of Wellesley, the Governor of the immense British possessions in the east, there was no person who would execute this important trust so well as Major General Everington—for to that rank he had risen—and a young lieutenant in the Indian army, was selected to convey to him the news of his appointment. To this honorable commission of the general's was added the privilege of visiting England, (a pleasure he had long wished, but which the disturbed state of the Indian affairs had hitherto rendered inexpedient) after the accomplishment of his mission to Tcheran.

It was on a warm afternoon that the bearer of the despatches, lieut. McAuly, approached Agra and entered that once large and opulent city; and proceeded without delay to the mansion of Gen. Everington. A high wall of stone surrounded the extensive pile, and when admitted within the ample portals, none but those who have witnessed the beauty of an Indian pleasure-ground, when in its rich freshness and sweetness, can have an idea of the enchanting nature of the place. The white blossoms of the pomegranate, and the crimson lily of the citron—the clustering richness of the fig tree, and the beautiful green of the broad-leaved palm—the golden orange and the delicious mango were all there, and united to form a whole, of which the inhabitant of the frigid north can form but an imperfect estimate. The thickets of acacias, myrtle and roses, which bordered the walks, lent their charms and their fragrance to make the place an earthly paradise. Through the avenues of palm could be seen the broad Ganges with the blue lotus dancing on its bright waters; and the Indian pheasant and the bird of paradise display'd their beautiful plumage on the overhanging branches.

Young McAuly was ushered into a splendid suite of rooms; and on inquiring of General Everington was told by the servant in waiting, that his master was out, but would soon return.

So fascinating however were the beauties of nature without, and so delightful was the scenery around, that McAuly was unwilling to exchange them for carpets and mirrors, though of the most splendid kind; and drank having a glass of sherbet, told the servant he would walk until the general returned. Taking his course down one of the walks which led beneath the trees we have mentioned, he followed it through several turnings and windings until it suddenly opened upon a little green flat, over which hung some huge plane tree branches; and in the centre of which a fountain was, and the water which the basin, and dipped their petals in the flood, attracted the notice of the young lieutenant, and he was advancing to it, when the sweet tones of a woman's voice, and the lively laughing prattle of children, arrested his steps. He turned his head, and saw at one side of the flat, under a bower of woven woodbine and wild roses, the general reclining on a sofa—near him on another, was a beautiful woman, and before them on the smooth, green turf, two lovely girls were frolicking, in all the unrestrained gaiety of childhood and innocence. The general had been reading a book which he still held in his hand, but had closed it to witness, with a parent's fondness, the happiness of the charming girls, and enjoy the look of affectionate exultation, which he read as his glance met the eye of his beautiful wife. At that moment the youngest of the girls noticed McAuly, and running to her father, threw her arms around his neck:

"Pah!" said she in a hurried voice; "an officer has come to meet us, may I go and meet him?"

"Certainly, my dear," was the reply; and in a moment the little girl held hold of McAuly's arm, and was leading him towards the bower.

As the young European officers in that region, were considered, by the general,

as his children, he instantly rose to meet him, and with the graceful ease, for which he was distinguished, welcomed McAuly and introduced him to his affectionate and lovely bride.

McAuly attempted some apology for his intrusion on their retirement, but was cut short by Everington, who assured him that an apology was needless, and that he was never more happy than when he had the pleasure of meeting his European friends. After enjoying the refreshing coolness, and admiring the beauties of the place, for a little while McAuly followed the general and his charming family to their mansion, where every thing denoted the princely munificence of the owner. Sherbet was cooling in marble basins—the finest and most delicious fruits were handed about in massive burnished plate—the air, cooled by the Ganges entered the windows darkened by the richest silks of Averpore—and the softened light fell on the most splendid carpets of Ispahan. But not here, as it is too often the case, had wealth shut out from its possessor the finer and nobler feelings of the heart.—That kindness which had secured to Everington and his beautiful wife, the affection of all their dependants—which had caused the oppressed to look to him as the redresser of their wrongs; still retained its ascendancy in their bosom, and showed its effects in the harmony that pervaded the magic circle of the influence. The favorable impressions of the young officer were confirmed, and he was soon convinced that he had never seen a woman who so fully realized those beautiful creations of the fancy, the peris of the Persian mythology.

General Everington accepted, without hesitation, the important trust conferred upon him by government, and with the promptness which distinguished him, had soon completed the necessary preparations for his journey; and with the numerous train of servants, and the equipages usually attached to an eastern embassy, were under way to the Persian court.—

Coralinn, too, and the two charming girls accompanied him; and the difference between the manner in which they had left the dominions of the scab, and that in which they were returning to it, was not unfrequently the subject of mutual conversation not unmixed with gratitude, between Everington and the fair Coralinn.

Travelling by easy stages—received by the Persian authorities with the deference due to the rank of the individual, and the importance of his errand—and carefully observing the indications of public feeling on the extensive frontier, Everington at last arrived at Tcheran. Here he was welcomed by the court, and the differences which had called him hither, were soon in a train of amicable adjustment. A series of splendid entertainments were given alternately by the schah and the ambassador, at which the best feelings prevailed and the reconciliation of the conflicting interests more easily effected. Coralinn was universally admired. The adoption of the European customs, gave her an opportunity of often appearing with the general in public; and the believers swore by the beard of Ali, that in the person of his wife, the infidel Frank, was possessed of a gem worthy of being placed in the diadem of the prophet.

In the midst of the rejoicing, news arrived that Abbas Mirza, who had been called from the government of Schiras to conduct the operations of war which the schah was waging on the northern frontier of the empire with the Russians and after a series of victories, concluded a peace with the infidel dogs, and was on his return to Tcheran. He arrived and was received by all ranks with enthusiasm; and by the schah as a son who had proved himself worthy of succeeding to the throne of Persia. As was the custom of the representatives of the different powers at the capital, sent in their congratulations to the king on the event, accompanied by such presents as they thought proper, and as the influence of the prince was all powerful at the court of his father, Everington determined by the richness and magnificence of his to secure the favorable notice of the prince. He was successful, and as the success article, were presented and displayed, Abbas requested him to advance to the divan, which he occupied immediately below the throne, for the purpose of explaining to him the uses of a mathematical instrument which he had never before seen. As Everington advanced to comply with the request, the keen eye of Abbas was fixed on him, and an indefinable recollection made him start when his eye met that of the general. Concealing his embarrassment, however, he listened to the explanations of Everington with interest; and giving orders for the careful preservation of the instrument, he ordered it to be removed to make way for those presents that remained to be received from others.

The next day an Emir attached to the train of the prince, presented himself at the palace occupied by Everington, with the information that his highness, prince Abbas Mirza would, if agreeable to the Frank ambassador, pay him a visit that afternoon. Everington who well knew that this was the greatest act of condescension the prince could perform, and

would be considered by the Persians, as the highest honor a foreigner could receive, did not hesitate to signify the pleasure he should receive from the intended honor, and preparations were instantly ordered for his reception.

"My dear Coralinn," said Everington, as he entered the apartments devoted to the ladies; "prince Abbas Mirza confers upon us the honour of a visit this afternoon. From some movements of his yesterday, I am inclined to think he remembers me, and, I suppose, wishes to know whether I have forgotten him."

"Have you accepted the honor?" asked Coralinn.

"Certainly," replied Everington; "I had no wish to refuse."

"Surely there can be no satisfaction in meeting that man," said Coralinn; "and I can hardly believe that he comes with any but the worst intentions towards you. I shall be miserable till the interview is past."

"Nonsense, my dear," answered Everington, kissing his wife; "remember that major general Everington is not the same poor, unprotected Frank he was when he formerly bore the weight of Mirza's vengeance. Yet," added he, looking tenderly on the beautiful creature, he still held in his arms; "when I remember the cause of his cruelty, I am more than half inclined to forgive him; and cheerfully would I again run the same risks to secure the same prize."

"There is one thing of which I am glad," said Coralinn; "the custom of the court render it impossible that he should see me here."

"The custom of the court prevents it, but not the custom of the Franks by which we are governed," said Everington; "and I acknowledge I should feel a little pride in showing him the lovely woman whose affections enable him to triumph over his wrath. So, my dear, if the prince requests it, as he will, if he suspects who we are, you must be ready to be presented to him."

Coralinn was a woman, and when her appearance was to be attended with no danger to her husband she had no objection to the interview; and perhaps, too, she felt a slight emotion of pride in the thought that she could assist in demonstrating the triumph which her Everington had obtained.

The hour fixed upon by the prince, arrived, and mounted on his own elephant, which seemed perfectly conscious of the honour conferred upon him by the person he carried, and surrounded by his numerous retinue of attendants, Abbas Mirza made his appearance. Alighting from his magnificient howdah, he was received by Everington, with the respect due to the prince of Persia, and conducted to the apartments prepared for his reception.

Coffee was handed round, hookah was smoked, the conversation was animated, but general, and not an intimation was given by the prince, of the particular object of his visit. Still Everington perceived that he was closely observed by Abbas and every moment watched.—He at length requested the general to be seated near him on the divan, and addressed him in Hindostan, a language not understood by the attendants.

"Ever since I saw you yesterday," said the prince, "I have been haunted with the idea that I have seen your face before; if so, it was in connection with circumstances you can not have forgotten."

"Your highness is right," replied Everington; "you have seen me before, and there are some events in our lives that can never be forgotten."

"Abbas Mirza knows no deception," said the prince; "if he has done wrong, he trusts, by the aid of the prophet, to make ample reparation; are you the Frank that a few years since was sentenced to the punishment of the boat, at Schiras, and escaped or disappeared in a mysterious manner?"

"I am," was the reply.

"Praise be to Allah that you lived; I was sensible I wronged you; but you can not be ignorant of the motives by which I was actuated," said the prince.

"I am not," replied Everington; "and then, as now, the motive almost made me forgive the act, cruel as it was."

"Ah, that young and beautiful Circassian!" exclaimed the prince with animation; "she would have called the prophet to earth from the seventh heaven. I was distractedly in love with her, and you threw yourself in my very path; is it surprising that I attempted to crush you? Is it not rather surprising that you escaped my vengeance?"

"I did escape, however," said Everington with a smile.

"I know you did; but how, I could never conjecture," replied Abbas; "and I know too, that the lovely Coralinn disappeared at the same time, I have often thought I would surrender my claim to the crown of Persia to see that beautiful creature again for one hour. One thing however, that adventure taught me; that power has no effect in winning a woman's love, and that the attempt to confine them by walls, is as futile as would be the hope that they would prove a barrier to the white winged dove of Cashmere."

"You would not regret her escape if it had been the means of rendering her happy," said Everington.

"Not now," replied Abbas; "but then I was unused to restraint, and I fancied it was impossible for me to live without her. When I thought of her, I turned with disgust from the fairest beauties of Persia; but the wound my pride has received was nothing to what I felt when I met the eye of calm reproof, that I read in the eye of her loved father, for his lips never spoke what I knew he felt."

"Is the worthy Herman then living?" vastly inquired Everington, for his fate was involved in uncertainty, and Hamors, whom the task of making inquiries had been committed, could only learn that he had not been seen for several years.

"He is not; he survived the loss of his daughter but a few months," was the reply of Abbas. "But," continued the prince, "I understand you have your wife with you; and if that per is your bride, and it is not inconsistent with your ideas of decorum, I would wish to see her again. I owe her a debt, I would willingly have discharged in kindness to her father, had he lived to require it."

"Coralinn is my bride," said Everington, and there was a feeling of gratified pride in acknowledgement; "she can appear if you wish it."

"One thing further"—said the prince; "I wish the interview should take place with none to witness it except yourself."

"You can be gratified in that," replied the general, "and you may also name your own time for the interview."

"Let it be now—I am impatient to see her," was the reply of Abbas Mirza.

A wave of Everington's hand was sufficient to clear the room of his attendants, an example which was followed by the prince. Everington then struck a blow on the Chinese gong which hung in the room, and directed the servant who obeyed the summons, to inform his mistress that her presence was requested. The prince remained without speaking until she was announced, when Everington met her, took her hand, and led her to the prince, who instantly rose from the divan to meet her.

"By Allah! the same beautiful creature still," said the prince, as if thinking aloud, at that moment he took her hand and, with oriental gallantry, kneeled as he placed it to his lips.

"You have nothing to fear," said the prince, noticing the slight agitation shown by Coralinn, though scarcely less than was evinced by himself; and requested her to be seated near him on the divan. "The past is indeed remembered," he continued; "but it is I that may beg your forgiveness, for acts which even the sincerity of my affection for you, could never justify."

"The happiness which Allah has been pleased to bestow upon me, since those days has banished every unkind feeling from my bosom," replied Coralinn, as at the same moment she cast a glance of superior affection and pride on her adored Everington.

"The blessing of Allah always rests on the virtuous and the good," said the prince, "and may he continue to do so," added he, as he took Everington's hand and clasped his and the lovely Coralinn's firmly together in his own.

"Have you no children?" Asked Abbas after remaining silent a moment.

"We have," answered Everington.

"I must see them; I must know how happy it is possible for Allah to make mortals," said Mirza.

Coralinn left the apartment, and in a few minutes returned with her two beautiful girls, one in each hand.

"You have nothing to ask this side Paradise," said the prince to Everington, with visible emotion, as he gazed on the lovely children, the picture of their mother; and he drew them tenderly to him and kissed them repeatedly.

"There is but one thing more," said Abbas, and calling an attendant gave him some directions and bid him loose not a moment. In a short time the servant returned and placed in the hands of the prince, two caskets of the richest workmanship and materials.

"That casket is yours," said the prince, addressing Everington; "and this one," continued he, taking a key from his pocket, "contains something that I must beg Coralinn and her two daughters to accept."

The lid flew open, and from it took a turban of the richest materials, on which was a splendid aigrette of diamonds, which he placed on the brow of the fair Circassian; and then proceeded to decorate with a carnet of pearls and gems, the snowy necks of the beautiful and delightful girls.

At this moment the voice of Imaun was heard from a neighbouring minaret, calling the faithful to prayers; and the prince rose to depart.

"The day is past," said he, "but by me it will never be forgotten, for it has relieved me of a heavy burden. I saw you," continued he, addressing Everington, "and your countenance awakened the recollection of other days. I made inquiries, and learned that your wife was with you, and you know the rest. I have seen Coralinn, I know that happiness attends her, and if she is happy all around her, must be so."

Bowing to Coralinn and her daughters, the prince, accompanied to the steps by Everington, retired; and, mounting the elephant, which seemed sensible that he

was a favorite, returned to the palace of the monarch. His visits to the mansion of Everington, while he remained at Tcheran, were, however, frequent; and his friendly attentions were the source of much pleasure to them all.

After accomplishing the object of this mission, Everington and his charming family proceeded to Bussorah on the Persian Gulf, and from thence embarked for Europe. The beautiful Coralinn, in the circles of the metropolis, still found that admiration continued to follow her; but disgusted with the formal heartlessness of the society, she sighed for the quiet happiness she had enjoyed at Agra, and her wishes on that point corresponding with those of the general's, after a residence of two years in London, they returned to India.

Here, on the banks of the Ganges, they enjoyed all the happiness of which the human mind is capable; and in the smiling countenances and heartfelt blessings which enjoy their protection, may be read proof demonstrable, that virtue is its own reward, and that happiness is diffusible.

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